



Mawson Lakes Preschool Healthy Eating Policy



Healthy Eating is fundamental to good health throughout life for all people. It underpins healthy growth and development, contributes to health and wellbeing, positive mental health and quality of life, and plays a role in preventing disease and disability.

Overall for good health children need to drink plenty of water and eat plenty of fruit, vegetables, legumes and cereals ...and importantly choose foods containing less fats, less saturated fat, less sugar and less salt.

Children with appropriate nutrition have improved cognitive development, attention span, work capacity, behaviour and attendance at school and preschool. Establishing healthy eating patterns at a young age provides a critical foundation for good eating patterns.

DECS Healthy Eating Guidelines 2004

At Mawson Lakes Preschool we aim to promote nutritional eating habits in a safe, supportive learning environment for all children. Sound health and wellbeing habits are developed when children are encouraged to eat meals in a positive social setting, followed by recreational physical activity.

Early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits and can benefit the children in three ways:

- Short term: Maximises growth, development, activity levels and good health
- Long term: Minimises the risk of diet related diseases later in life e.g. heart disease, strokes, some cancers and diabetes
- Good nutrition contributes to good health and wellbeing which is vital for positive engagement in learning experiences.

Advice from speech pathologists and dentists indicates that children should be eating crunchy foods and using cups for drinking.

Curriculum

Our preschool's food and nutrition curriculum:

- Is consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
- Includes activities that provide children with knowledge, attitudes and skills to make positive healthy food choices and learn about the variety of foods available for good health
- Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills including preparing and cooking healthy food
- Integrates nutrition across the curriculum where possible
- Integrates the Early Years Learning Framework, Implementation guidelines for indicators of preschool numeracy and literacy in DfE preschools and the National Quality Standard.

The Learning environment

Children at our preschool:

- Have fresh, clean tap water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day
- Are encouraged to bring their own named cup to access our fresh water or a named bottle containing water only
- Eat in a positive, appropriate, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours
- Use the preschool garden to learn about and experience, growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious foods.

Educators at our preschool:

- Understand and promote the importance of children having breakfast prior to attending preschool
- Teach the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum
- Ensure healthy food choices are promoted and are culturally sensitive and inclusive of our preschool community
- Encourage children to eat both their snack and their lunch, however we are unable to make them eat
- Ensure our preschool is a breastfeeding friendly site.

Our preschool will ensure a healthy food supply for preschool activities, celebrations and events, limiting availability of foods containing high fat, sugar, or processed foods during preschool activities and events to no more than twice a term, in accordance with the Healthy Eating Guidelines.

Nutritional information about healthy eating is displayed and information will be provided through updates in our newsletters and on our website.

Food and water supply

Our preschool has the following guidelines for families for food brought from home:

Each day your child will need to bring:

- A named cup or drink bottle for independent access of water during the day- If a child forgets their cup or water bottle, the preschool will provide your child with a cup for the day
- An insulated bag/ or container with fruit/vegetables **ONLY** for snack
- Lunch in an appropriate **small lunch box** – no cooler ice packs or insulation required as lunches are stored in the preschool refrigerator.



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Snack time

Parents/caregivers are asked to supply fruit and vegetables at snack time to:

- Provide children with important minerals and vitamins
- Encourage a taste for healthy foods
- Encourage chewing which promotes oral muscle development.

Parents/caregivers are asked to supply fruit and vegetables **ONLY** for snack time. The snack containers are to be kept in children's bags which are placed in their locker under the verandah.

Parents/caregivers are required to provide enough fruit/vegetables for two snack times (morning and afternoon) in an insulated snack container with a cooler ice pack. Children will be reminded to have a drink regularly during the day and have free access to cool drinking water at all times. Children are expected to bring their own named drinking cup or water bottle which is kept in their bag.

Suitable food for snack time

- Vegetables (any that your child can eat independently)
- Fresh fruit (any that your child can eat independently)
- Fruit salad
- Dried fruit.

If your child brings an inappropriate snack they will be asked to put it back in their bags to eat when they get home and parents/caregivers will be notified via a note in their child's information pocket. Your child will be offered an alternative healthy food snack. If your child has not been provided with fruit/vegetables for snack time, your child will be offered an alternative food item such as sultanas or an apple.

If the snack food you have provided for your child is not fruit/vegetables and meets our Healthy Eating policy guidelines, it will be added to your child's lunch.

Lunch Time

At Mawson Lakes Preschool each child is required to bring their own lunch. Our Healthy Eating guidelines support parents/caregivers in providing healthy lunches for preschool. To promote independent self-help skills children are responsible for putting their lunch box in the lunch crates provided.

Some examples for a healthy lunch include:

- Pita bread filled with salad or vegetables and low salt lunch meats (e.g. ham, chicken, beef)
- Savoury sandwich/baguette/bagel
- Rice cakes with savoury filling
- Salad wrap
- Savoury rice
- Cold rolls
- Pasta salad
- Sushi
- Falafel and hummus
- Baked beans
- Tuna salad
- Home-made pizza
- Yoghurt
- Custard – vanilla flavour only in a squeeze pouch
- Cheese sticks or cheese wedges with crackers
- Plain full cream or reduced fat milk

Parents/caregivers need to ensure foods provided do not include **EGG** or **NUT** products.

Foods unsuitable for preschool

Our healthy eating policy does not include items such as cakes/pastries, donuts, chips/corn chips, roll ups, chocolate, lollies, sweet biscuits, or any items **containing egg, nuts or nut products – this includes muesli bars**. At times other foods may need to be excluded due to children's specific medical requirements. Families will be notified through the Kindy Update.

If you are unsure about sending a specific food your child likes to eat please check with an educator before packing it in your child's lunch box.



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Please note that due to food safety regulations we are unable to heat or cook any foods for lunch. If you would like to send hot foods, they must be stored in a thermos, which will be kept on the kitchen bench. If you want your child's lunch to be stored on the kitchen bench you must complete a safe food storage procedure form. If inappropriate foods are sent for lunch, children will be provided with a Jam or Vegemite sandwich on white bread at a cost of \$3.00, to be paid for by the family.

Food safety

At Mawson Lakes Preschool we

- Ask parents/caregivers to notify the preschool of any food allergies or intolerances on enrolment or as they occur
- Promote and teach food safety to children during food learning/ cooking activities
- Encourage educators to access training as appropriate to the *Healthy Eating Guidelines*
- Provide adequate hand washing facilities for everyone
- Promote and encourage correct hand washing procedures and provide hand sanitiser stations
- Cook healthy options and provide preschool recipes for parents' information.

Food-related health support planning

At Mawson Lakes Preschool our educators

- Liaise with families to ensure a suitable food supply for children with health support plans that are related to food issues
- Exceptions to this policy will only be made when a child requires certain foods due to dietary and/or medical needs and has been discussed with the Director (or delegate) at enrolment.

Working with families, health services & industry

At Mawson Lakes Preschool we

- Invite parents/caregivers to be involved in the consultation process to review our Healthy Eating policy
- Invite health professionals to be involved in food and nutrition activities with the children
- Provide information from health professionals to families and caregivers on the *Healthy Eating Guidelines* through a variety of media including:
 - Newsletters/Kindy Update/pamphlets/displays
 - Policy development/review
 - Information upon enrolment
 - Our website.

References

Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013

[The Guidelines | Eat For Health](#)

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

[Australian Guide to Healthy Eating | Eat For Health](#)

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Part 4.2 – Children's Health and Safety

[Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\)- NSW Legislation](#)

Early Years Learning Framework (2009)

[Approved learning frameworks | ACECQA](#)

Healthy Eating Guidelines for schools

[Healthy eating guidelines for schools | SA Health](#)

Lunchbox ideas; meals for early childhood settings

[Get Up & Grow – Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood – Resource collection | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

National Quality Standard 2.1 (2017)

[Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety | ACECQA](#)